

IT DOESN'T MATTER

Klu thar rgyal ལུ་ཐར་རྒྱལ།

The harsh weather and the heavy snow forced the herds woman to drive her livestock back to their enclosures earlier than usual. When she entered her home, she added dry sheep pellets to the stove and soon had a pot of bubbling meat. She often paused, listened, walked to the window, and looked outside anxiously for her husband, who had gone to the Township Town.

He was late.

After hearing the sound of a motorcycle, she looked out again and saw her husband, his head wrapped in her bright red scarf, speckled with snow. She opened the door and went outside to greet him.

"I'm freezing!" he exclaimed.

"Why are you so late?" she asked while helping him gather what he had brought back from town.

"I had a flat tire on my way home, but I was able to repair it," he explained.

"Sorry to hear that! How good you made it home anyway!" she said optimistically.

"A piece of glass! I hate those who throw bottles on the road! By the way, the old woman passed on."

"What? Who passed away?" she asked in confusion.

"The old woman with a bit of a mustache. She lived with her single daughter," he replied, walking into the house.

"Did she suffer a lot?" she asked curiously, following her husband.

"No, she died very quickly," he said, unfastening his robe.

†Klu thar rgyal. 2019. It Doesn't Matter. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 58:433-434.

"How lucky! Locals were wrong in saying that she would surely suffer a lot before her death," his wife said as she removed steaming chunks of mutton from the pot and placed them on a platter.

"People will say anything!" her husband said and sat next to the stove, where he removed his shoes and warmed his cold feet so near the stove that they began to steam. "What cold weather! Anyway, she wasn't the only one! Some of her old colleagues died without suffering, too," he continued.

"But everyone believes it, including my father, who witnessed those women who were leaders in 1958 mistreating locals," she countered.

Her husband only said, "Please pour some soup in a bowl for me rather than arguing. I'm going to the funeral after supper."

"Is the funeral tonight?" his wife inquired.

"Yes, I would have missed it if I hadn't gone to town today. That's where I got the news," her husband replied.

She walked to the window, looked outside, and observed, "The snow might not let up tonight."

"It doesn't matter," her husband replied, chewing a piece of hot meat, "I have to go. At least I can help chant *ma Ni* if they've already found enough men to carry the corpse to the mountains."

TIBETAN TERM

klu thar rgyal ལུ་ཐར་རྒྱལ།